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An Interview With

RONALD C. BRODIE

May 31, 1984

Ronald C. Brodie was interviewed on May 31, 1984, at the Estes Park Area Historical Museum. Mel Busch, Sam Gates, and Betty Hedlund conducted the interview.

The tape is on file at the Estes Park Public Library and may be checked out. The reader should keep in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written word.

The Estes Park oral history project is jointly sponsored by the Estes Park Area Historical Museum and the Estes Park Public Library.

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Interview with Ronald C. Brodie (RB)  
Date of Interview: May 31, 1984  
Interviewers: Mel Busch (MB)  
                  Sam Gates (SG)  
                  Betty Hedlund (BH)

Begin Side 1

MB     This is Thursday, May 31, 1984. We'll be interviewing Ron Brodie this afternoon. I'm Mel Busch, director of the Estes Park Area Historical Museum; and also here are Sam Gates and Betty Hedlund. If they'll each say their names, we'll know who it is for reference on the tape.

SG     I'm Sam Gates.

BH     And I'm Betty Hedlund.

MB     O.K. We'll just shut this off, and when Mr. Brodie comes, we'll start right in with him.

---

RB     Well, what do you want first?

MB     Well, let's start maybe with the beginning. Who you are, where you were born, and what brought you to Estes Park.

RB     Well, I can start there. Are you ready now?

MB     Yes.

RB     I was born in Denver... Denver, Colorado. I'm a Colorado boy, and I came to Estes Park in 1931. Of course, I was in the grocery business. I was running a chain store in Boulder when I was eighteen years old. Then, that Honor Brite Company which was back out of Greeley called me and wanted me to come to work for them. Of course, my being single, it didn't make any difference whether I was living in Boulder or where. So, I went to work for them--went to Fort Collins. They, the<sup>n</sup> transferred me to Loveland, and then they transferred me to Estes Park. So, I came into Estes Park in 1931 and took this store over. That's how I got to Estes Park.

BH     Now, that's the store next to the bank? The old bank--

RB     No, that's the one that old Sam Service--

BH     Sam Service, O.K.

RB     That's the Sam Service--

---

\*For the purpose of indicating unclear passages that could not be transcribed, ellipses (...) have been used throughout this manuscript.

BH Then, when did you go up to the--

RB I went up there in 1936.

MB Up where?

BH Next to the Estes Park Bank. (corner of Colburn & Big Horn ave.)

RB I bought out Harry Boyd.

BH Yes.

RB So, we were up there in 1936. I was up there for twenty-one and a half years. Then, we built our building down there where I am now in 1957.

SG That late?

RB So, we've been there ever since.

MB When you were up there was that your own, or were you still affiliated with Honor Brite?

RB Oh, no. That was our own. My brother and I were partners, and we called it Brodie Brothers.

MB What was your brother's name?

RB Chester. We called him Chet. He never was here. He was a silent partner, more or less. He and I were going to go into business together. He wanted to go into the trucking business, and I wanted to go into the grocery business. So, he said, "I'll make more money accidentally, than you try to on purpose." So, that 's the way we did it.

SG Did you go to school in Denver?

RB Yes.

SG Where did you go to school?

RB I went to Columbia and Skinner and North.

SG Oh, did you? I went to West.

RB I didn't go to college, but I graduated from high school.

SG Well, you got up here in the grocery business just in time to greet the Great Depression, didn't you?

RB Well, probably. I got started steadily in 1927.

SG Oh, did you?

RB 'Twenty-seven, yes.

- SG Well, you got a head start on it. How long have you--have you always run charge accounts for patrons?
- RB No, no, no. We don't run charge accounts. All we use charge accounts for is convenience for those that have money. It's a convenience is all that we use charge accounts for. It's not to help anybody out that doesn't have any money. It's convenience for those that have money.
- SG Yes.
- RB It's more convenient for them to pay their bills once a month rather than write checks every day. That's why we carry them.
- SG Did you ever hear in the grocery business of lagniappe?
- RB Hear of who?
- SG Lagniappe. That used to be--that's an old Cajun term, I think. But, anyway, it's where the--whoever is in the grocery business and other kinds of business where people pay a monthly bill the grocer used to give a little sack of candy or something to the kids ....
- RB When I was a kid in Denver, we used to patronize a certain grocery store. It was the practice. That's the reason I know.
- SG I know, my mother used to give me the checks to pay our bills of the month down there, too, and that used to be the same thing. That's like the old barber candy stick when you went to the barber.
- BH Yes! Well, now you were in the store up by the bank when you went into service.
- RB That's right.
- BH Because I remember Ted Spencer was in there--
- RB He ran the store while I was gone.
- BH Yes, that's what I thought.
- SG What branch of the service were you in?
- RB I was in the infantry.
- SG And you were at Camp Roberts--for how long?
- RB Almost two years. They kept me there. They didn't ship me. And, then, they kept me; and then, I was going to ship out. The old man got a hold of me and talked to me out on the field there for two hours. I decided to stay.
- SG In ~~regard to~~ your public service up here, how long did you serve as mayor of Estes?
- RB I was on the city council for thirty-two years and served as mayor for

RB two separate terms for eleven years.

MB What years were those?

RB It was in the 1950's. I've forgotten how many, but Glen Proster was mayor. He resigned, and I finished his term. Then, I ran three of my own, which was six years; and his year was seven. Then I gave my end of the gavel to Pop Graves, and Pop had it for about sixteen years. Then, he handed the gavel back to me, and I took it over again for another four years. I quit in '72.

MB Yes.

SG That's a long time, isn't it?

BH Yes, that is.

RB It got to be a part of my life. That's the reason I had to quit.

SG What during that long period of time stands out in your mind as some of the most exciting events that happened in Estes Park?

RB Well, the most exciting things probably were that we had the drilling of the Adams Tunnel up here, you know. Magoffin had the contract, and things were pretty active around here. We slid out of that without having any trouble with our economy at all. We just slid right out of there and right into our regular economy. Of course, I signed water contracts that we had for years there with the government and one thing and another, but then--zoning, we started zoning. With one thing and another it kept a person pretty busy.

SG What are your most vivid memories about the opening of Trail Ridge?

RB I've been up on top shaking hands with the mayor on the other side for a good number of years, and we got to thinking there was nobody else going to do that except Fred McLaren and me.

BH Yes, that--

RB He was up there, and we shook hands and opened it up. It used to be quite an occasion. We did that for years. I don't know how many years it was. It was a lot of them. Sometimes we could go up to the top, and sometimes we had to drive around.

SG But you always had the ceremony?

RB Oh, yes, we had that. But sometimes we went in the gate there to Rainbow Curve, and they closed the gate behind us and had the bulldozers that, you know, opened the road so far to have the opening. Then, we'd turn around and come back. They'd lock the gate again, and maybe it wouldn't be open for a couple of weeks. We'd been there.

SG All that time that you served on the city council did you have any women on the council?

RB What?

SG In the period of time that you served on the city council were there any women?

RB No, all male.

SG All men.

RB All men.

SG Was Mrs. Houston the first woman elected?

RB I understand she was.

BH Yes, she was, I believe.

SG What percentage of the people who worked on Trail Ridge, the governmental housing, and the dam--when did the dam come in here? I can't remember. When did we first get the--

RB Gee, I've forgotten just what the date was. I remember when we used to call it "The Meadows" before the dam.

SG Yes, that's where I used to fish.

RB But I can't remember the exact dates--

MB I think it was '49, and then they filled it in '50, I believe.

BH Yes.

SG I think it was after the war.

BH It was a long time building because I remember in the early '40's it was going, and everybody that lived here had come up and lived in anything they could get.

MB Well, the tunnel started in the late '30's.

BH Yes ....

RB They worked on that for several years.

SG What I was really going to ask was do you have any recollections of the indices or index of the impact of the governmental workers who were housed up here during the time this activity was going on?

RB Well, we had lots of them that wanted certain things done, too; but I don't know, we always kind of figured out that was going to be for the town, you know. If we did what a lot of them wanted to do, why it would have been an awful liability to the town. So, we didn't do it.

- RB Now, why there are none of those people around anymore. So, it was good that we held out and did what we thought was proper.
- BH Yes, they had a union office up here at one time.
- RB Yes, sure, but we never had any trouble. We had a lot of people working around here, but when that quit we slid right into our regular economy. Everything just worked fine.
- BH Well, I know that everything that anybody could rent--a garage or a summer home or anything went for rentals to those people because they had to have housing.
- MB What are some of the biggest changes that have happened that you remember? I mean like--I know the tunnel was one thing that caused a lot of change in Estes. Are there other things that stick out that were turning points as the flood was last year?
- RB I don't know how you folks feel about it; but if it wasn't for the National Park, you know, a lot of us wouldn't be here.
- MB Right.
- BH Yes.
- RB Because that's the main attraction that we have. Of course, the tunnel helped; and, of course, we had other things. The National Park expanded a little; and, of course, the city expanded. Then, when we started zoning, why we zoned and found that you couldn't zone it all at once. You had to take it piece by piece, which was good. I happened to be home when at one of their meetings here Larimer County tried to zone the whole county. I went back and said, "Boy, that's no way to start doing that!" So, when I came back why we started and took in the north end first and then kept adding to it. It worked out really well. People saw the benefit of zoning. So, that's how it is.
- SG Do you associate any particular period or administration of county government as being more productive, like being a diamond in a coal bin in terms of relationships with the city?
- RB Well, we used to go down to the county and tell them we were the biggest city in the county because if they take average population, we were.
- BH Yes.
- RB And, of course, when Alf Landon ran for President of the United States, he had his headquarters here.
- SG I remember that, and that's the last time I rode a horse down Main Street with Alf Landon!
- MB Where did he stay? Was it out at Meadowdale?
- RB No, he had McGraw Ranch.



MB At McGraw.

RB He had his headquarters at McGraw Ranch.

SG That was an interesting period. Who were some of the other outstanding personalities or national figures?

RB Oh, we had Bob Mitchum here once, and we had, oh, "A Queen for a Day." We had programs when it started.

BH Yes.

RB We were lucky, and we got the right people. I don't know. We just bugged along, and it seemed as though we had everything to offer. We had the--I don't know how to put it, but we had the climate, the clientele, and everything else. It seemed to work really well as far as we were concerned.

SG Who stands out in your mind as having the best relationship or making the greatest contribution from the Park Service to the--

RB Well, David Canfield was the one who did an awful lot for the Park; and, of course, his wife Helen. I can remember when Helen Canfield and Margaret Rostel wrote an ad for a special issue of the Trail for me. Their theme was "Have fun with food!" And here just about eight years ago King Soopers came out with it and said, "Have fun with food!" We had that slogan years and years before, but she did a lot of good. She was the daughter of the fellow who founded Stanford University.

SG Oh, is that so?

RB She did a lot for me, people's hearing. She was hard of hearing herself, but she did a lot for that. She sent a lot of kids to college that nobody ever knew about.

SG What was her name again?

RB Helen Canfield.

SG Canfield. She wasn't any relation to the Canfield Hotel in Greeley?

RB No, David Canfield was superintendent at that time, and he was--

BH Yes, he was great.

SG Do I take it that she was the daughter of Leland Stanford?

RB Probably. I think she's probably the only daughter, I'm not sure, but she was a wealthy person. She really was, but you'd never know it.

SG Did they live in the Park area or in the middle of town?

RB No, they lived out here above McGraw Ranch. I mean--

BH MacGregor.

RB MacGregor Ranch.

BH They had a house there.

RB They had two homes up there.

BH And then at one time didn't they live down there where Maces bought along the river?

RB They bought a couple along the river there.

BH Yes, u-hm yes. I don't know whether it was because they couldn't get up to the upper one.

RB Well, Dave had that cabin, and he just kept it, you know, to have his friends and everybody else come up and use it during the summer. He had a set of rules there that he left, you know, saying, "Put the dirty laundry here and the clean laundry there" and anything else. He donated that to them just as he did in Arizona.

SG Is he still living at all?

BH No.

RB No, no, there isn't a chance of it.

BH Ron, do you know Jesse Jay's wife's name?

RB Irene.

BH Somebody has been bugging me about that, and I couldn't come up with that name.

SG What was her last name?

BH Jay, that had the Chez Jay. I could think of--everybody could think of Jesse, but not Irene.

RB Could be Irene.

BH Now, I've got to remember who asked me!

RB They were great people.

BH Oh, they were fantastic!

RB They were.

SG Well, Betty said something about your spending some time in Lyons on your way up here. Were you at Lyons?

RB I never lived in Lyons, but I spent my summers in Lyons. We had a hotel down there, and my dad opened up the quarries back about 1890. That's before any reservoir. He employed five or six hundred men in our quarries, and the railroad ran right up to the quarries. He had practically every nationality in the world. He had Swedes, Norwegians,

RB Finlanders, and everything else that worked in there. Of course, he had the hotel up there and the railroad out there. He gave the land to the cemetery there in Lyons; he gave the cemetery property. When Dad died, we gave them some more land there to enlarge the cemetery. Of course, he had moved his offices to Denver. I was born and raised in Denver. We just sold our--we had a Victorian home in Denver. We just sold it about seven or eight years ago.

MB Where was that located?

RB In north Denver. So it was one of those things that--he had his offices in Denver; and, of course, everything in Denver was wide open, you know, gambling and everything. They'd get a payday in Lyons, and it took two hours to go on the train from Denver to Lyons. Monday morning they'd call Dad up--the police would--and say, "We have so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so. What do you want done with them?" He'd say, "Take them down to the depot, put them on the train, and send them back to Lyons.

SG But now was that an interurban or a train?

RB That was the Burlington Railroad.

BH And that came into the little redstone station that's still down there.

RB That's right.

BH Now, was that quarry east of Lyons?

RB North.

BH North. There was one east, and I --

RB We still have one hundred and twenty acres of quarries left.

BH Oh, you do!

RB Real good quarries, too.

SG Now, is that red sandstone?

RB Sandstone.

BH Yes, u-hm.

SG When you drive down there today is that stone part of that quarry or from some place else?

RB Which stone are you talking about?

SG That flagstone--red sandstone.

RB You mean that that's--

BH Piled up around there.

RB As you make the turn on Foothills Road right there that's Loukonen Brothers. They have that. They buy the stone that these people get out.

BH Did you send any to the University of Colorado?

RB Yes, we furnished all the stone for Macky Auditorium down there. Then, we sawed a lot of stone, too. My brother is very handy at figuring and running quarries and everything. He sold them a lot of sawed stone, too. Then, the university had their own quarries up Left Hand Canyon.

BH Yes, I remember that.

RB And my brother ran those. One of my other brothers ran those quarries for them.

BH Well, how many brothers did you have?

RB I had five brothers.

BH Five brothers, and you had sisters.

RB I had five brothers, and my sister had six.

BH Large families.

RB I had four sisters, and my sister only had three.

SG Is Brodie Scotch?

RB Yes. My Dad was born in Scotland.

MB Would you want to spiel off the names of your brothers and sisters?

RB Oh, I don't know that it's necessary, but I did have four sisters and five brothers. We also have a castle over in Scotland named the Brodie Castle, and it's up in Inverness, Scotland.

SG Any golfers come out of that?

RB I don't know. I play golf, but I think I'm about the only one that I know of in our family.

BH You bowl, too.

RB I'm about the only one that bowls in the family, too.

BH Do you still bowl?

RB I still bowl.

BH Yes, I know you used to always have a league, and you always followed all the--

RB I had a traveling bowling league. For tw<sup>en</sup>ty years we bowled all over the United States, advertising Estes Park.

BH And having fun doing it!

SG What do you think the impact of--you can dodge this question if you choose to for sensitive reasons, but maybe you'd care to comment. What would you predict the impact of a Safeway store will be in terms of other grocery business and so on here in Estes.

RB Well, I could comment--you know we had a Safeway here for two years?

SG No, I didn't. When?

RB You didn't know that?

SG I'd forgotten. When was this?

RB That was back, oh, in 1935, '37.

BH Somewhere along in there.

RB They were here when I first started my business.

BH I think we had one of their carts, Ron.

RB I used to work--I worked in chains before I came up here.

SG For Safeway?

RB Well, Safeway was buying all of them out. So, I suppose I worked a little bit for them, but I worked for--I had my first chain store in Boulder when I was just a kid.

SG I see. It was a grocery chain.

RB That's right.

SG I see.

RB We had stores all over Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico similar to our AG organization only they owned all the stores themselves.

MB Yes, that Safeway was at Sam Service's, ~~to~~, wasn't it?

RB That's right.

BH U-hm.

MB Yes.

RB Yes, I had a store there before they did.

MB We have a picture here somewhere that shows that Safeway there.

BH Yes, and I'm sure that cart came from there. We have a green pushcart, grocery cart.

RB A little green one?

BH Yes.

RB We had little green ones.

BH Somebody swiped it for me; I didn't!

MB That's their cart!

RB It's probably ours.

BH I'm sure it was.

MB I think it came from there.

BH I'm sure it did. It's the spitting image of those I remember down there.

SG What impact did the flood of July 15th have on your operation...?

RB This year? Last year? It really--we had almost four foot of water in our store.

BH That's a lot.

RB Yes. That probably took us for a couple of hundred thousand. Then, of course, we got hit up the street, too, so that was another about the same and never received anything. Yet we're hoping to recover some, but not yet.

BH You've got hit with water down there before when it came down that little creek by the field--

RB Yes, but that was nothing though, Betty. That just came across the main street and in the front door.

BH Yes, I know--

RB We swept it out.

BH You swept like mad, and everybody--

RB Oh, yes, we swept like mad, but that--

BH At least it was coming right towards you at sort of a low place there.

RB But see, after that, they put the new road in; and it raised the center a little bit. So, we had no more trouble after that.

BH Yes.

RB That was Black Canyon Creek.

BH Yes, Black Canyon. I couldn't think of that.

RB That river in behind us is terrible.

BH Yes, right behind the football field.

SG What do you remember off the top of your head about the Stanley and how it's related to the Trail-Gazette?

RB What question was that now?

SG I'll start over again. Do you think of any outstanding events, coverage, personalities related to the Trail-Gazette?

RB No, I know for years we--I've been advertising in the Trail for years.

BH Yes.

RB Of course, it was just the Trail, and then they had another paper start as the Gazette. Then, they combined. Of course, I sold Mr. Stanley groceries. He and his wife--I sold them groceries for years. He was a very personal friend of my dad. My dad would come up here. One year he played billiards with Mr. Stanley. He had a billiard table up in his garage, and he had a turn-stile in his garage. He'd drive in straight ahead, then turn, and he could drive straight out.

BH And drive back.

SG Is there a reverse on the Stanley Steamer?

MB I think they could back them up. There was some reason that he didn't want to back up, and I've heard several stories. Do you know why?

RB Well, I talked to Mr. Stanley. I didn't talk to him about this reverse forward and all that on it, but I said when he sold out to some people--I won't mention anything about that--but whoever bought him out why they knew more about it than Mr. Stanley and his brother did. So, they figured that people who didn't want to fire up a car to start it and would rather push a button to start it, so he said, these folks knew more about it than they did. So, they sold it to them. I understand they took it back later, so I don't know.

MB You never did hear why he didn't want to back up? I'd heard that he was afraid of running over people. Then, I've heard other stories, and I don't know.

RB I know he came up there, but I know he had a turn-stile there at his garage. He drove straight in, he'd turn it, and he could drive straight out.

MB I didn't know if he ever--

BH Being an inventor, maybe he thought that was one of his pet things to do.

RB Yes, and I know he told me when I was a kid, he said, "You know the strongest stool in the world is a three-legged stool. And it's true,

RB I guess.

MB Yes, yes.

Are there any things you know, little stories about various people-- not that we want to tell stories on them, but I mean things that would bring remembrances of different people like Stanley or others that you can think of?

RB I remember Abner Sprague when he sold the Sprague Lodge. They gave him permission to fish any time he wanted up there by his lake. Of course, they leased it to him for about a dollar a year, and they got to keep it for about twenty years. They, they bought him out. And I used to do a lot with Mr. Sprague. We'd fish there in the winter time any time we wanted to, chop a hole in the ice and fish.

SG Do you remember Stead?

RB No, I didn't know Mr. Stead. I knew Will Lewis and all, but I didn't know Mr. Stead. I knew Ed ~~Sto~~pher and everything else out there, but I didn't know Mr. Stead.

BH And then, of course, there was Johnny Adams.

RB Yes, Johnny Adams. I took him to my Father and Son Banquet when he was eighty some years old, and I took Abner Sprague to the Father and Son Banquet when he was about ninety-one. I took Harry Boyd, who was eighty-seven or so when I took him. Now, this was in a period of three years. I took him as my son. You see, I had two daughters, so I took him as my son: Father and Son Banquet. We had just kind of a little lark. Johnny Adams, I took him; and, of course, old Miner Bill. Why, oh yeah, he was a great friend of mine. Nobody else could get him, but he just didn't get along with anybody else, only me.

BH Well, you probably took the time and trouble with him, Ron, and others wouldn't.

MB Yes, we have a few things of his and so forth that were given to us, and they tell a little bit about some of the things. You know, they were trying to get him off this land and like that.

RB Well, he used to sit up there with a shotgun, you know.

BH Yes, I know.

RB In the National Park, and they wouldn't go up in there either. So, he willed that property to me. So, I've forgotten where I have that will. I've got it some place with property and wills, and so anyway I told Dave Canfield, "I'm going to go up on our property, and I'm going to sit there. I'm not going to let anything move in on that property."

SG You didn't get anywhere.

BH I can just see Dave.



RB Just joking with him.

BH Yes, I know it.

SG Do you remember anything about Joe or Ethel Mills at the Craggs?

RB I didn't know Joe Mills. Oh, I knew him, not too well. I knew some of the Mills.

BH But Joe wasn't up here as much though, was he? He was--

MB He was coaching down at Boulder.

BH Yes.

SG Her name was Ethel.

MB Johnny Adams used to spend a lot of time down in front of your store when it was over there.

BH He was the doorman.

RB Yes, he was the doorman for me--come in every morning, and if there was any dirt around the floor, he'd sweep it up and everything. He really-- I took him down to the doctor down--Doc Wiest told me I had to take him to the doctor. I took him down there, and he wouldn't believe me that he was eighty-some years old. I took him down there, and they fed him better. Then, he went over to Boulder, great friend of Paul West.

SG How did you get along up here year-round without a hospital?

RB I don't know. I guess we just stayed healthy. There were hardly any people here.

BH Yes, you didn't--

RB But I don't know. We had our doctors that we contacted, you know, that came. Of course, if anything too vital was wrong, I suppose we went to the valley.

SG Who were some of the doctors? Dr. Mall and who else?

RB Dr. Mall was one, and Dr. Wiest was the first one, I understand. He was mayor of town one time.

BH Yeah.

RB He was the first mayor. Doc Mall took care of my family when they were kids here.

BH M-hm. I don't remember any between Wiest and Mall for some reason. Well, there were some that came in, but they didn't stay long. They went over to Steamboat, you know, and other places. They just couldn't make it.

RB Well, like young doc came up, you know, to be with his dad (The Malls); but he was an eager beaver and everything. There was just too much-- there wasn't enough here for him, and so he went to California....

BH No ....

Well, you knew Billy Sevier?

RB Oh yeah!

BH I can remember him as a kid when he was out on the back porch at Macdonalds' fishing. He just always dressed in that black suit.

RB That's right.

BH A long, thin rail.

RB Quite a pool player!

Oh yeah!

Begin Side 2

BH Where Mike is!

RB That's right.

SG Where the Wheel Bar is, is that--

BH Yes, Mike bought that.

SG That was a pool--

BH Mike Nagl. Yeah, that was a pool hall.

SG What do you remember about the Dark Horse and Riverside?

RB Well, you know Ted Jelsema owned that, and then when Nub Gillan sold it .... He said the city ought to have that for parking, and I said they surely should. So, he said that these fellows want to buy it, and they are going to put in a gift store and have a mall with gift stores all around that pretty near and everything else. I think the town should have it. So, he said that he didn't want his money all at once. He wanted it over a period of ten years. It wound up that we bought the property, which was a godsend to that whole block there.

BH Oh yes, u-hm.

RB To the whole main street it was a godsend for parking.

BH Yes.

SG What are your memories about the old woodshed where the mall is? Do you remember what it used to be?

BH Transportation--

RB Rocky Mountain Transportation Company. Yes, I had a cousin who used to work for the company. His name was Pete McDonald. He lived in Estes Park before I came up here. Do you remember this?

BH It doesn't do anything to me.

RB He had a daughter and a son. He was here before I came up here, and he left before I came up here. Then, Casey Rockwell--I guess he used to work with my dad down there in Lyons. A lot of those people came from Lyons.

BH Yes, I knew that.

RB I served on the town board with Casey Rockwell when he was mayor.

SG Was that Transportation Company designed primarily for the Fall River Road trip or--

RB Oh, no, see, they came out of Denver. They had the franchise from Denver to Estes.

BH They had the chalets.

RB They had the chalet, and then they had--

BH And Grand Lake.

RB Grand Lake Lodge. Then, they had their tours, and they'd stop at all their places there and all. Roe Emory?

BH Yes, I remember him.

RB They had the Stanley Hotel there one year.

BH M-hm. That's when it had all the Indian rugs on the lobby floor.

RB Is that right? I don't remember that.

BH I've always remembered those Indian rugs out at the Stanley.

RB And one of the in-laws had the Lewiston Hotel.

BH Yes.

MB You remember, speaking of the Lewiston and that, of what other fires around town do you have good memories? Well, not good memories, but memories.

RB Down there at the Plantation one time they had a good fire. I was fire chief when the Lewiston burned. It was a fun fire. In fact, I can't think of his last name, but he was in the store at the time. I told him, "Do you want to ride up with me?" I said, "Your hotel is on fire." So, he rode up with me, and we went into the hotel in the lobby. I said, "What do you want done first?"

RB "Well," he said, "I think we'd better make these people aware that we've got a fire, and they've got to get out."

MB That one went pretty fast, didn't it?

RB Yes, as soon as they chopped holes in the roof, it did.

BH What about the Higby fire? Do you remember that up on the hill? It was either--

RB Nina Higby?

BH Yes.

RB I don't remember that.

BH There was fire up there, and it just took this house. It wasn't Higby; it was in that family though.

SG Going back to the Lewiston. What's the speculation as to why that wasn't rebuilt? They haven't used that area with beautiful scenery.

RB Oh, it was a beautiful area, but I suppose it would just cost too much money to do it apparently. You know, there's only one Estes Park, and we still have summer and winter. I suppose it--well, just like it was with those in Denver. If you'd check back and read and hear about the Stanely Hotel in all these years and see why that kept going, you'd wonder. So, I say it's just one of those things that I don't know.

SG Is that property still in the same family hands, or has it turned over since the fire? Do you have any idea?

RB I think they sold it. I think it's....

MB On that, that's the Lewiston you are talking about?

BH Yes.

RB I'm sure it is.

MB On that one, did you ever determine what the cause was on that? I've heard speculations of a flue or something electrical.

RB We had the fire departments from down below come up to help us.

BH Yes.

MB What about the Sherwood and the Josephine?

RB Well, the Sherwood, I was gone the day that caught on fire. I wasn't in town.

BH I've been in there--

RB Jess Boyd bought that one afterwards.

- BH I'd been in there the day before that it did catch fire. I was in there with Leona Graves measuring, and we almost had a funny feeling, you know, after being in there alone with the key and all.
- MB Yes, that--
- BH The Long's Peak fire--when the Long's Peak Inn burned when the Fagan boys had it, Estes Park went to that, didn't it?
- RB Oh, yes! We went to their--of course, if the city had to take care of the fire department itself, why we could only stay within the city limits; but it's been a donation deal. It's been volunteer; and when we have a call for help, why they go all over because of donations to the fire department. So, it helps the city. It helps all of us people here.
- BH Yes, yes.
- MB What's the biggest fire you remember in which you were involved?
- RB Gee, I imagine that Lewiston fire was; however that one down at the Plantation was a pretty good one. That was a good fire.
- BH Yes.
- MB That was the one where right after it is when they built the building they have now, or is that different?
- RB They didn't tear it all down.
- SG To your knowledge was there ever any interest expressed by the Dunraven family heirs and so on in the historical--in Estes Park? No communication?
- RB Not that I know of. No, not that I recall. There probably was, but I didn't find out.
- SG I just wondered seeing that the Estes family--
- RB James and those people, they probably were pretty active on that.
- MB Betty started to say something there a minute ago.
- BH Well, now I've forgotten what it is. It wasn't really important.
- SG Now, my question about Dunraven, seeing the interest that the Estes families had in having family reunions up here periodically every ten years or something, I often wondered whether there'd be any chance of getting the Dunraven family over here for some kind of--. They'd build that up as a community--
- MB I doubt it really. The last I heard the last heir had sold the manor over in Ireland, and he was pretty crippled up anyway. I think he had had polio or something. So, what I've heard from people who have

MB visited over there, the Dunravens didn't seem to have that much interest in coming here. They were always interested in people that would visit them from here.

BH No, I think that's something that's just going to be in the past and stay there.

MB Yes.

BH I mean the name is brought up--

MB He didn't have too many good memories to write about it, and so his heirs I don't think--

BH He wasn't playing fair either so that--. Of course, he knew Donald MacGregor and that--

RB He used to buy eggs from him.

BH Yes.

RB Potatoes..... He used to visit with him in the front room. That's when you could get in the front room.

BH Yes.

RB Very nice people.

BH Yes. I know Sammy Buchanan used to go up there--and Victoria. They used to tell me about, you know, things that happened up there and how good they were to them.

RB You know it's really something Victoria-Sammy. She's real loyal to me.

BH Yes, I look over at that little house, and I think of the many nights that I went over there and watched Bob Hope with him because Staceys had always seen that he had a good TV.

RB Well, Wayne Stacy and they, you know--Victoria used to work for them.

BH Yes, yes.

RB I remember when Staceys built their place. You know, I think they had a boy and a girl both, I'm not sure.

BH Yes, they did.

RB But anyhow, they'd come in the store, and they'd stay with me. Their folks would say, "Come on, we're going to go!" They'd say, "No, we're going to help Ron!" They'd come in there and help me in part of my store there.

BH ... I don't know, that's sort of sad what they've done to that beautiful home.

RB Now, that Livingston home they've turned it back as it used to be.

BH Yes, I'm glad to see that because that was a beautiful place.

SG Do you have any particular memories about what you associated with the summer population versus the winter round-the-year, such as the Greeley Colony and whatever?

BH Fort Morgan.

RB Well, I don't know. Of course, our community has never grown by leaps and bounds. It's always been a slow, healthy growth; and it seems to me like the oldtimers here don't sell their homes. They pass them on to the kids. I know we have the old folks and then their kids and then their kids and their kids. Now we're starting, I suppose, with the fourth or fifth generation of kids; but they're a great bunch of people.

BH Oh, they came out, and they just stayed here. I had put down Oldbergs because they always come to mind.

RB That's right.

BH Out there at Braeside.

RB Well, Mary, you know, still comes up there. I mean she married Jensen.

BH Yes, she comes in here.

RB She comes in here all the time and--great people.

BH Yes.

RB The Oldbergs.

BH Yes, that's--

SG Our place--Kitty's grandfather bought it in 1903, and we remodeled it and that sort of thing.

RB Which place was that, Sam?

SG Right there on Prospect--right directly up from Sommervilla. Right there up the hill--

BH Oh, right on--

RB Right on Sommervilla.

SG He sold the forty acres to the Craggs to the Mills ....

RB Was he related to the Markers or Parkers?

SG His name was Parker. I remember Parker and Bruce Parker.

RB I remember Parker.

SG That was Kitty's maiden name.

BH Oh, I didn't know.

RB We used to deliver groceries and everything else to those old widows. We'd take in the coal and wood and everything else.

BH And the mail.

RB Put it on the back porch.

BH Take the mail to Mrs. Dings out there.

RB Oh, yes, Helen Dings. She'd always call me if she left town because we kind of ....

BH Yes, Ron does things for everybody.

RB Oh, I haven't done much.

BH You have for years and years.

SG The name is one that keeps bouncing up all the time. That's why all the members of the community and of the museum board wanted to get this interview with you on tape. We're supposed to have your voice recorded as well as the background that you could provide for your experience.

MB Now, you were talking about not giving candy to the kids when they pay the bills. Some people don't even have a charge, and the kids get their candy at Halloween only its a big, round orange one!

RB Well, we give pumpkins away. We've done that for, gosh, I don't know how many years, Betty.

BH Oh, heavens, I don't know. You've always--

RB Forty years maybe.

BH It's got to be that or maybe more.

MB You give away a bunch of those every year, don't you? About how many a year? Why let's say like last year?

RB Oh, yes, we give away lots.

BH Where do you get those? In Longmont?

RB Longmont. I used to go out in the field and get them myself when I first started that.

BH That would be--

RB It used to be quite a chore.

BH Yes, it would be.



RB You got to stay young all the time.

BH I wish you could.

Well, there were so many people up here; and, of course, you'd know them all like the Yores and the Sterlings and the whole--

SG Say, do you remember anything about J. Partridge Adams? (Charles Partridge Adams)

MB Painter?

BH He was out in the Ring--. Do you remember the Ring? I call it the Ring Cabin out on Fish Creek next to the Parrots.

RB Oh, that's the one that--who bought that? Later on, he wrote a couple of books.

BH Books, I can't--Soglow!

RB Soglow.

BH That's the one, and he had that for a while.

SG Kitty's grandfather had J. Partridge Adams do a watercolor which we have above the mantle right there at the house. We got that Moraine Park which was a wedding present for her grandmother. Then, five years later we commissioned him to do another one up in Moraine Park. They are beautiful watercolors.

RB There's a Sweet family out here, you know.

BH Yes.

RB Their dad used to be governor.

SG Yes.

RB Governor Sweet. When I was going to Skinner Jr. High School in Denver, why I was head of the color guard. He came out and gave us a checkup there one day, you know, looked us all over to see how we were doing-- Governor Sweet. I had a picture of me in the color guard here. I think maybe I've given it to these folks up here, I'm not sure.

BH That's a great house out there.

SG His granddaughter is here now.

BH ~~Richard~~ RITSCHARD (Carol)

Well, going back to the painting--out there at what I have always called the Ring Cottage--it's a home really. That's the one where they say that there is some work done. Where? In the front room?

MB      Somewhere. I don't know whether there's a porch or someplace where he had painted right on the wall.

SG      A mural or something?

BH      Yes, and we--

MB      That's what we've heard.

BH      We spoke about it, but I have never really known anybody there to go up and knock on the door and say or approach--somebody could have been just dumb enough to have painted over something as great as that.

MB      People do that.

BH      As great as that.

MB      Or put up paneling or something.

RB      That wouldn't be so bad to put up paneling.

BH      But I just wondered if that was--

SG      We'll check that out.

BH      Yes, you ought to see.

SG      I remember going to the Denver Art Museum, and they had exhibits in there of Charles Partridge Adams, and they also spoke of--he must have also had connections in Taos and Santa Fe, New Mexico ....

BH      Well, probably, because I don't think anybody ever lived--I think that was a summer home out there until maybe Soglow took it over. But all those old homes up and down there have changed hands, and--

SG      By the time you had come up here to establish your business had the horse and buggy and that sort of thing pretty likely disappeared...?

RB      Oh, yes.

SG      ....

RB      I never did ..., but maybe once in a while we'd ride the people from the depot up in a horse and buggy. We had buggies up there, too. My brothers had cars. We all had cars.

BH      But the horse was very prevalent out here like in liveryies.

RB      Oh, yes, you know you could just ride a horse up to where you were staying and let it loose. It would go back to the barn. You'd see those horses down in front of the house going back riderless, you know. In fact, when you rented one of those, unless you knew how to ride, it was hard to keep it from turning around and going back.

BH Yes, they wanted to go home. And if you ever stopped and had a picnic or anything, you know, you had to hold them down.

SG One of the things in the interviews that I've read that are on file over at the library there is a total absence of any reference to law enforcement. Then, if you read Western pulps as I do, why that's always a large part of the plots, you know. I wondered how have we been so fortunate as to have avoided any kind of experience to see a great monument as a jail and all that sort of thing.

BH Well, we had Eph Holton.

RB Oh, yeah, he was a --

BH And he was a friend of all the kids so that really they'd do things like move telephone poles and stuff like that at Halloween, but never got too rambunctious. And Gene--the Banks--

RB Eph Holton used to put Fred Tully to bed, you know.

BH Yes, I know I saw his name the other day.

RB His friends beat him back to the Dark Horse. He couldn't figure out how he got there so fast.

BH Aw shucks! Where did Tully work?

RB He worked for himself. He was a painter.

BH A painter! O.K.

RB He had this Chevrolet automobile, and he never had it in high gear, always in second. Remember that he never did put it in high gear at all.

BH Oh heavens, probably the roads wouldn't allow it anyway.

RB Oh, he took his foot off the gas. He slowed down right now.

BH Yes, he didn't let anybody fool with him. I can just see Eph Holton though.

MB Now, who was Eph Holton? Was that the only law enforcement at that time?

BH Now constable? What was his title? It wasn't chief of police.

RB He was just a --

MB Town Marshal? Or something or other?

BH Yes, marshal?

RB The fortuneteller, what's her name?

MB Madam Katherine?

RB She, you know married--

BH Oh yeah, that's right.

RB They were married I don't know how long.

BH That's right. I do remember that.

MB How long has she been around?

RB Ever since I can remember. Of course, I don't know. Nobody ever says anything against her or bothers her, so nobody ever bothers Madam Katherine, see.

BH She just parks and that's it.

RB Oh ~~Y~~eah, just a wonderful person.

BH Yes, she is that, but I was always afraid to go to her for fear she'd tell me something that would just worry me into an early grave.

RB You'd be doing what she told you were doing even whether you were or not!

MB That's the secret of that!

BH I just leave that stuff perfectly alone.

SG Do you remember anything about the theatres? About the movie houses and that sort of thing?

RB Yes, well, I knew Ralph Gwynn who had the theatre here when I came up here and, of course, Sam Service. You know he owned the building down there by that other theatre; and, of course, I used to have my warehouse there in the back in that theatre building. Charlie Herzog and they had the home place of Sam Service in there for their gift shop.

BH Yes, I knew that.

MB Did they tear his house down, or did they just convert it?

RB They--quite a bit of it--

BH Fran was working there, and they started building around it would tear little chunks down as they went. She said they never knew when they were going to fall through the floor next.

MB Do you know anything about the Log Cabin Café? What is the history of that?

RB Well, gee, I don't remember, but it's one of the oldest cafés in town.

MB Yes.

- RB Now, I understand this last year, you know Bob Johnson, he couldn't make it there. He lost almost everything.
- MB It's just changed hands recently.
- RB Yes, that's right. The folks that owned it took it back. They might have sold it again, but Bob Johnson was--I think he worked for Mac-Donalds. He had this fast food business, you know. He was quite good at it, I guess, and everything else, but that place up there was, oh, one of the oldest restaurants in the country around here.
- MB Yes, was it originally--you mentioned Johnson--was it originally Johnson's Meat Market or something like that long, long time ago?
- RB I don't know that I can tell you. That name is familiar, that Johnson; but, of course, we bought Harry Boyd out.
- MB Yes.
- RB And see, he was up there at the bank building for so long. So, I don't know what it was. It's been a restaurant long before I ever came to this place.
- MB Yes, I know they--
- RB Of course, when I came in to Lyons, I used to spend my summers down there; and he'd come and want his car pulled or pushed to Estes Park. I had to come up and help him. And he bought me a sandwich here after we got up here at the Log Cabin Cafe.
- BH Well, that thing has been going on as long as I can remember.
- MB Well, it's --
- RB Casey at the lumberyard.
- BH Gary Casey, yeah and --
- RB Gary Casey and what's his wife's name? They had that for a long time.
- SG Do you have any memories that stand out about fishing or hunting?
- MB Poaching?
- RB When I first came up here, why anybody that really needed meat could get a deer or an elk in the winter time as long as they didn't hang it out on the front porch and defy the law.
- BH Advertise it.
- RB They didn't seem to do much to them because everybody needed it; and as long as they used it all, why there wasn't too much said about it. But if they sold them or something like that, then that would be a different situation.

MB Was there much--I know in the twenties there were some things about the Ku Klux Klan up here. Was there much after you came?

RB No, there was none of that when I came up. I didn't get here until '31, but there was no KKK then.

SG Were you a charter member of Rotary?

RB No.

SG Do you remember anything about Rotary that stands out in your memory?

RB Well, I was president of Rotary when we had Captain or Coach Reed, you know, up here as our program, and I was only here two weeks afterwards 'til I was gone. So, I used to razz him about it when I came back. I said, "Yeah, I'll get you up here as our program, and then "You grab me and take me!" (Selective Service)

BH Yeah!

SG Well, he was from Loveland, wasn't he?

RB Yes.

SG And I'm trying to think of the colonel's name. He was head of the program in Washington. He was at Greeley. He was head of the placement office right at the campus there.

RB Right.

SG And he reached out and brought in--what was his name? You just mentioned it.

RB Coach Reed.

SG Yes, Reed.

RB He was football coach at Loveland. He could have been governor of the state any time he wanted if he'd wanted to run for it.

BH Yeah.

RB Well, are there any other--

SG No, but I'm real pleased to have had an opportunity to visit with your honor, Mr. Brodie.

MB Yes, absolutely.

BH I don't see much of you nowadays.

RB Well, I'm back again, Betty. We took a --

BH Trip.

RB Month off there last September. Then, my sister took deathly sick in

RB Loveland, so we were in and out of Loveland there for another six months and one thing and another. You know, we just got tied up, and there were some--

BH Well, I missed seeing you in the store.

RB Well, I'm back again now, so I'm around here again. I'll be here the rest of the summer.

MB Well, good. We appreciate it really.

RB Well, it's a pleasure.

MB And if you think of anything that you know you feel would add to the history of anything, let us know.

RB Sure.

SG Do you still own the property that was willed to you that you mentioned in earlier comments?

RB You mean in the National Park? Well, it was a fluke. See, he just said, "I proudly will to Brodie's --"

SG If you ever run across--

RB Well, if I ever do, why I'll see that you get it over there.

SG Yes, it would be nice to have here.

BH It wouldn't stand up in court, I'm sure.

RB No, it didn't then.

SG If you had a double-barreled shotgun, it would stand up a lot better than a lot of things today.

BH Poor old Miner Bill.

RB But, you know, that fellow would come in and trade with me all winter long, and just as soon as summer hit he'd go up there and live off nature the rest of the summer.

BH I know it.

RB He never--I knew he didn't buy from anybody else, no.

BH He had a great house up there.

RB Oh, you bet!

BH It was fantastic.

MB Well, we've got pictures around.

RB Is that so?

MB But I don't think we have any pictures of him, do we? Maybe we do. I have to look back in the file.

RB Well, he had an old suitcase. That's probably what you have.

MB Yeah, we've got that suitcase.

BH I think Betty gave us that. Betty brought that in.

MB It was either from her, or it was from the Police Department, I believe.

BH Police Department. But then, I think, they gave it to Betty because they knew she was in the museum.

MB Yeah, o.k.

BH Yeah, it's been a great town, a great place to live.

SG I'll tell you, it is inspiring.

BH And I think of Roberta and Fran together and Bill Herzog and all of those. They had a good time in school.

MB Before this thing runs out, do you have any suggestions on any of the buildings downtown that might have been covered up that might have some neat old building underneath a piece of plastic that somebody might be able to take back and really make it look better?

BH Whatever happened to Churches' up there? Wasn't that at one time it still had that bar in there or something?

RB Yeah, that was Graces', wasn't it?

BH I don't know--Graces, did they remodel that?

RB I think so.

BH Well, I suppose you could hit every store and just say you know some of them are run by--now that's a grandson that runs Grace, isn't it? Yeah. And some of those you might just find out. Now, Bairds could be the same except it's Seybold's now. Jack would be--

MB And that used to be Billy Park's place.

BH Yeah, and the Seybold boy would certainly be able to tell you something.

RB When did Billy Park's have the Seybolds'?

MB It was, I think, in the twenties, I believe.

BH And it would have been Bairds' before.

RB Well, I sold the Bairds groceries when I worked in the valley.



BH Well, it would be that same building.

MB Because the partner died in '27 or something like that, '26 or '27.

RB I didn't know that.

BH Now, that might be one to look into because I don't think that's been changed that much. You walk across those floors--

RB You might ask Jim Seybold about that ....

BH Yeah. I couldn't think of Jim.

MB With all the people doing things downtown now, I think it would be the ideal time to kind of get some of the look back that used to be.

BH Just go pull a board off the wall and see what you've got. There's got to be some little hunks of something left.

MB I've been talking to a few people about the log cabin down there.

BH Yeah, and somebody--

MB They're working on it.

BH Yeah, but they called.

MB Yeah, I talked to them down there about it the other day.

BH Because they wanted to know something about it so that they could keep up with the--

MB They're working on it.

Well, I guess this thing is about to run out, and again we appreciate your oral history.

BH Well, Ron, it's just great to have you do this. We appreciate it.

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